Education and Me

As I grew up, my parents always stressed to me how important it was to get a college education. With my mom not having a college degree, it was clear to me the restrictions that this places on one’s career and life goals. As long as I can remember, my mom was always working average jobs without much room for improvement. My father on the other hand, had received a college education and become a successful realtor. His job gave him a lenient schedule and allowed him to make time to come watch my sports games and participate in other events. Having parents with a diverse education background allowed me to realize what it means to be educated and what education means to me. To me being educated means furthering your education and learning from your past so that you may be successful in life. I do not mean successful as in making a lot of money and being able to afford materialistic luxuries, I mean something more than that. To me, being successful means being able to fulfill your life’s goals and to learn from your past mistakes. Having an education means trying your hardest at whatever life throws at you, and being able to look back on your past and know you gave 100% effort in everything you did.

“You were an amazing student, and I know you have a bright future ahead of you,” my social studies teacher told me as I talked to him, student to teacher, for the last time. Before we walked across the stage and received our diplomas, we were given a few minutes to talk to our past teachers and relive some of our fondest memories. As I reflected on all of these memories, I realized how they have shaped me into the person I am today, and how they have set me on the path towards that bright future my social studies teacher was talking about. Those 4 years of high school have taught me many important life lessons, all of them centered on the idea of hard work and perseverance. I remembered how playing sports taught me to try my hardest and to always be proud of myself and my accomplishments. I remembered the feeling of getting back a good test score, and how it taught me how hard work truly pays off. So to me education is this feeling of self-accomplishment when your hard work pays off and using this value of hard work and perseverance and putting it towards everything you do in life.

“I can’t tell you how proud I am to walk beside my son on a college campus,” my father told me these words as we toured Bloomsburg University for the first time. We were walking alongside a building when the sidewalk suddenly opened up to a vibrant green lawn with a beautiful fountain and eloquent art sculptures. It was at this moment that I got the feeling that this was the place for me, that this was going to be my future home. I had visited multiple colleges before Bloomsburg, colleges including Lebanon Valley College, Elizabethtown College, and Waynesburg University. These were all very nice colleges, however none of them gave me the feeling that Bloomsburg University did. Now here I am, almost finished with my freshman year, and I can still remember that feeling and hear my father’s words. My father had once again managed to remind me how much hard work pays off, and how well of a student I was in high school. College has helped me to feel even more educated, for I have not only learned from my classes, but things outside of the classroom as well. I have learned things like when to start studying, how to manage my time, how to make new friends, and how to get involved on campus and with other groups. I have joined intramural sports teams which have not only allowed me to get involved on campus, but to meet people as well. Through my soccer team I have become close friends with a person who turns out to live only 20 minutes from me back home. This is a relationship I may have never been able to build had I not stepped outside of my comfort zone and joined a team of strangers. Many of the things I have learned here at college cannot be taught in the classroom. I have once again realized the importance of learning from your mistakes and the importance of stepping outside of your comfort zone and experiencing things you never would have had you not pushed yourself to become involved and meet others. Experiencing things that you use to set a path to a bright and successful future is to me, what it means to be educated.

“I really hope this is what I want to do,” I thought to myself as I filled ‘Criminal Justice’ into the box that declared my major on my application to Bloomsburg University. I was very worried at the time that this may not be what I want to do and had no idea what I would do if that was the case. Now, almost finished with my freshman year, I almost laugh at myself for being so worried about it. I know now that Criminal Justice is most certainly what I want to do. I have found myself becoming very passionate about the major and the classes I have taken. I no longer worry about if Criminal Justice is the right major for me, I just worry about my grades and how well I do in each one of my courses. However, every time that I worry or become stressed, I think back to the words that my both my teacher and my father told me. I remember how hard work had always paid off in the past, and that is what inspires me to try my hardest on everything that I do. I will use my experiences with studying techniques and time management to help limit my stress and prepare me for whatever academic challenges lay ahead. I have become very educated in the sense that I have learned many life lessons when it comes to hard work, perseverance, and determination. Life lessons that I will continue to use in my future and in my career in Criminal Justice. I know that I will always try my hardest at everything I do and persevere to have the most successful and fulfilling career possible.

Education does not mean how many fancy words you know, or how well you can solve a math problem. Education is how many life lessons you have learned and how you use them to make yourself a better, more successful individual. I have learned the importance of hard work and perseverance and how those two values will take you a lot further in life than a grade on a test, or the amount of money in your bank account. Life is a journey full of lessons, and how we learn from these lessons is what defines us and brings us success.